

DEC 9 1964

National Press Club

Press Club Election Gives Voters a Choice

By CHARLES YARBROUGH

The National Press Club, which does and lives on other people's politics, goes soul-searching on its own Friday. Members who trooped the hustings in the last political campaign, apparently brought back the tempo. They go to the polls to weed out aspiring candidates from one of the largest ballots in the club's 56-year history.

This year, the issues go to the people, maybe at the expense of wrecking the "escalator" which, in the begones, has been a more effective political machine than Tammany Hall.

This was based on reasoning that the lower political levels should have contests if only to screen out someone along the

way from a board member to the presidency. It was status for some, quo for many more.

The Friday contest, with Cowles Publications' Clark Mollenhoff and William M. Blair of The New York Times seeking the presidency, is the first major one since a three-way fight for the vice presidency in 1953.

Competition down through the ranks massed in the closing weeks of the campaign like the curfew call at the bar.

Mollenhoff has been a board member, financial secretary and is this year's vice president. He was unopposed until voices of "more opposition" began to

be heard. This appears to be the main reason for opposition for all offices except the vice presidency, where National

Geographic's Win Booth is unopposed and Scripps-Howard's Edward W. Scripps 2nd stands alone.

Carey Cronan of Connecticut newspapers, Joseph W. Gambatese and Stan Hamilton of Traffic World want to be treasurer.

A lone victor will come out of the contest for financial secretary between Vernon R. Louviere, free-lance, and Francis A. Porter of The Washington Daily News.

Six are seeking three places on the board for three-year terms—Allan W. Cromley of the Daily Oklahoman, Ralph de Toledano of King Features, Bill Gold of The Washington Post, John W. (Pat) Heffernan of Reuters-Australian Associated Press, Charles A. McAleer of The Washington Star and Neil Regeimbal of Chilton Publications.

Candidates will deny that the issue of permitting women correspondents in with the rest of the newspapermen at notable

luncheons is still an issue. The woman factor won that bitter battle.

There is talk of ultra-conservatism and middle-of-the-road.

It may be confusing for the first-time-voter.

The sample ballot carries this instruction:

First—Move red handle all the way to the right.

Last—Move red handle to left to record vote.

But the whole thing is far more than friendly banter at the bar.

The club, with 1,300 of its 5,000 members eligible to vote, operates on a million-dollar annual budget. It is the largest stockholder in the National Press Building Corp., which owns the building of obvious value at 14th and F streets NW, where a \$4 million renovation program is under way.